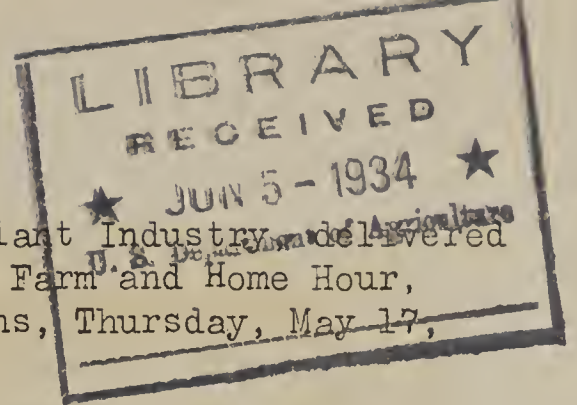


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THE GARDEN CALENDAR



A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations, Thursday, May 17, 1934.

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Hello folks: My first garden calendar item today has to do with the control of blackrot disease of grapes. Last season a lot of us lost practically our entire crop of grapes grown for home use on account of the presence of this blackrot disease. I called Dr. Roberts, one of our fruit disease men, and asked him to tell me the best way to prevent this blackrot disease destroying our grapes before they have a chance to ripen. Roberts tells me that the best thing is to spray the vines very thoroughly with Bordeaux mixture, but that he finds that most people do not begin spraying soon enough. He says that the first spray should be put on about the time the new shoots are 3 to 4 inches in length, then a second application should be made one week later and other sprayings at intervals of every ten days or two weeks, until the grapes begin to ripen.

Roberts recommends the standard Bordeaux mixture consisting of 4 pounds of copper sulphate, also known as bluestone and blue vitrol, 6 pounds of hydrated lime and 50 gallons of water. Now let's get that down to a smaller quantity. Suppose you have only a small number of grape vines to spray and want say about 12 1/2 gallons of the spray. In that case you would take 1 pound of copper sulphate, 1 1/2 pounds of hydrated lime and 12 1/2 gallons of water. For three gallons of the mixture you take 4 ounces of copper sulphate, 6 ounces of hydrated lime and 3 gallons of water.

To make the Bordeaux mixture you first dissolve the copper sulphate in a little hot water, using a stoneware jar then add water until you have one-half of the amount of the final mixture. Next you dissolve the lime in the other half of the water and pour the two solutions together and they will produce a creamy, blue mixture. I'd advise you to strain the mixture through about two layers of cheesecloth to take out any particles of lime that may remain to clog your pump or nozzle, then fill up your sprayer and give your grapes a complete spraying. When you get through spraying your grapes and have any of the solution left you can use it on your roses to control rose-leaf black-spot or on your tomatoes to control leaf-blight. Be sure to wash your sprayer out and run clean water through the pump and nozzle when you get through.

Remember that if you had a bad infestation of black-rot last season the spores of the disease are lurking around on your grape vines, on the ground and on any old dead or mummied grapes that are hanging to the vines. These spores are ready to spring into life whenever weather conditions become favorable and then they will get onto your new crop of fruit and destroy it. I lost practically all of my grapes from black-rot last season because I did not begin to spray in time, in fact I waited until the disease appeared before I began to spray, while as Roberts says I should have begun spraying even before the grapes began to blossom. By the way, I've noticed that the blackrot is more troublesome on grapes that are grown on arbors than on those grown on trellises and get plenty of sunlight.

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With a great amount of fruit killed in various places this season it looks as though we had better take pretty good care of what is left. I saw apple trees the other day that were so heavily loaded that it will most likely be necessary to thin the fruit but in many places the set of apples seems to be very light. Good care of the trees will be necessary in order to get a good growth of fruit for you know as I told you recently it takes twenty to thirty good healthy apple leaves to produce a good apple and the same general rule applies to all fruits.

Now a word about our vegetable gardens. You folks who live in the area that has been suffering so greatly for moisture this spring have had a hard time getting your gardens started. I understand that in most sections there have been fair rains, and that conditions are now favorable for planting garden crops even though the season is late. If you can get your crops planted during this period of relief from the drought, you may be able to grow good gardens even though the rainfall should be scant during the growing season.

I want to suggest that mulching along the rows of many garden crops with partially rotted straw or with straw bedding manure will go a long way toward holding the moisture, and also help to keep the weeds under control. Just the other day former Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. R. W. Dunlap, was telling me what fine tomatoes he grew on his farm in Ohio last season by mulching the plants with straw.

Potatoes can often be grown in the same manner, and if you happen to have an old straw stack on your place, you can use some of the straw to good advantage for mulching a number of your garden crops. Once you get enough moisture in the soil to give you a good start then apply a mulch you can generally hold the moisture until the crops are made.

In case you are so situated that you can apply water to your garden, I would suggest that you avoid sprinkling but apply the water to the soil at the roots of the plants. I prefer to allow the water to flow in little furrows along the rows of plants, then after the water has all soaked into the soil, I draw dry earth over the top of the moist earth to hold the moisture. A little water properly applied will often do wonders during dry periods, and here is another suggestion in case you are planting garden seeds in soil that is fairly dry, always firm the soil over the seeds so as to bring the soil particles in direct contact with the seeds. I find that it pays to sprinkle a little water in the bottom of the furrow in which you plant seeds during dry weather before covering the seeds. There are a great many little ways in which you can take advantage of weather conditions, especially during dry periods.

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